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# 2023 RIVER RANGER RENDEZVOUS

## NORTH FORK OF THE FLATHEAD RIVER

### JULY 25-29, 2023

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US FOREST SERVICE | RIVER MANAGEMENT SOCIETY

## Overview and Registration

The Flathead National Forest, Hungry Horse-Glacier View Ranger District, is partnering with the River Management Society's Northwest Chapter to host the 2023 River Ranger Rendezvous on the Wild & Scenic North Fork of the Flathead River in NW Montana. The section we'll be floating is Class I-II and meanders through a glacial valley at the western edge of Glacier National Park. Rafts, inflatable kayaks, and canoes are craft that will do well on this section. This trip is geared towards river rangers nationwide as a chance to learn, network, and explore a new river.

We will start the trip at Hungry Horse Ranger Station the morning of Tuesday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, with a group introduction, area orientation, and a short discussion/training on river solitude monitoring. We'll travel up the North Fork Road to (hopefully) the Canadian Border River Access and camp riverside. The morning of Wednesday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, we'll finish rigging boats, go over a short bear safety talk, and then launch on the North Fork! We'll spend 2 nights on the river, taking out on July 28<sup>th</sup>. The section of river we float may change as we get closer to the trip if river flows are too low.

We are in prime grizzly bear habitat up here! All food and other attractants will need to be stored in a bear resistant manner for this trip to comply with our Food Storage Order and to be bear safe. Please see the [Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee's website](#) for a list of approved bear resistant products and resources on camping and traveling in grizzly country if you are unfamiliar. We also recommend bringing your own can of bear spray.

If you have questions regarding the trip, please reach out to Echo Miller-Barnes at [echo.miller-barnes@usda.gov](mailto:echo.miller-barnes@usda.gov) or Colter Pence at [colter.pence@usda.gov](mailto:colter.pence@usda.gov).

### Registration

This trip is open to River Rangers from across the country. Registration is first come, first serve, and will be capped at 20 participants. Registration will be open until July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and a waitlist will be maintained in case of cancellations. The trip fee includes meals for the duration of the trip.

The cost for this trip is \$65/person for River Management Society members and \$85/person for non-members. RMS membership connects you with hundreds of river professionals (including dozens of other rangers!), keeps you up to date on river management news and training opportunities, and includes deals on river gear. To join, please visit <https://www.river-management.org/join>. RMS is a fantastic resource for river professionals!

To register, please fill out the attached form and send with cash or a check payable to Martin Hudson to the following address:

Martin Hudson  
PO Box 92  
Pinedale, WY 82941

### Pre-trip Information

Participants are encouraged to arrive at Hungry Horse Ranger Station in Hungry Horse, MT, the evening of Monday, July 24<sup>th</sup>. Otherwise, please plan on arriving to Hungry Horse by 0900 MST on Tuesday, July 25<sup>th</sup>. Camping at the ranger station will be available for folks who come Monday evening; plan to check in with either Colter or Echo when you arrive so we can show you where to go. The ranger station has showers, bathrooms, and a potable water spigot and there is a grocery store and several restaurants in Hungry Horse. Participants will need to provide their own meals for Monday evening and Tuesday morning.

### Trip Information

We will travel to the boat launch (~2 hr drive) from Hungry Horse the afternoon of Tuesday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, and camp at the boat launch that evening. From there, we will launch on the North Fork the morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> and spend 3 days/2 nights on the river. We'll take out around midday on the 28<sup>th</sup>, with time to de-rig, run shuttle, and travel back to Hungry Horse/beyond. There will be an option to do a ½ day float on the whitewater stretch on the lower Middle Fork of the Flathead. This will be a day trip from Hungry Horse. Once we leave Hungry Horse and head up the North Fork, we'll lose cell phone coverage, so plan to make any arrangements beforehand. More detailed information will be sent out to confirmed participants closer to the trip dates.

### Shuttle

We will plan to run our own shuttle. We'll pass our takeout on the way to the boat launch, so we can drop shuttle vehicles on Tuesday, July 25<sup>th</sup>. There may be a chance we outsource shuttle to a local outfitter, depending on final numbers. If that ends up being the case, we will contact participants closer to the trip dates with details on cost and logistics.

### Meals

Meals will be provided starting with dinner on Tuesday, the 25<sup>th</sup>, and ending with lunch on Friday, the 28<sup>th</sup>. Please plan to provide your own meals outside of those dates. We are looking for someone to help plan/prep meals for this trip. If you are a meal planning guru, please reach out to Echo or Colter and mark it on the registration form!

### Weather

Late July in NW Montana is typically warm and dry, although it's not uncommon to have afternoon thunderstorms roll through. Daytime temperatures are usually in the 80s/90s, and nights are cool, with temps in the 60s/70s. Afternoon gusts are not uncommon.

Directions

The Hungry Horse Ranger Station is located in the town of Hungry Horse, MT, and is about 2.5 hrs north of Missoula. If you’re traveling from the west, you’ll take Highway 2 east out of Kalispell towards Columbia Falls/Glacier National Park for 24 miles to Hungry Horse. If traveling from the east, you’ll take Highway 2 west from Browning towards West Glacier/Kalispell for 77 miles to Hungry Horse. More detailed directions/map will be provided to confirmed participants.

Date	Plan
Tuesday, July 25 <sup>th</sup>	Convene at Hungry Horse Ranger Station at 0900 for upfront orientation, coordination, and training elements. Afternoon travel to Upper North Fork. Camp at boat launch.
Wednesday, July 26 <sup>th</sup>	Rig boats, bear safety talk, then launch ~1000 on North Fork! Camp on river.
Thursday, July 27 <sup>th</sup>	Continue on North Fork with stops for group discussions. Camp on river.
Friday, July 28 <sup>th</sup>	Take out ~1200. Do wrap ups/take aways and run shuttle.
Saturday, July 29 <sup>th</sup>	Optional ½ day float on lower Middle Fork whitewater stretch. Logistical information will be provided to interested participants closer to the trip.

Discussion Topics

As this trip is meant to be an opportunity to learn from each other, we’ll be facilitating some group discussions on topics we feel are relevant to river ranger work right now. If you have topics or success/challenges you want to share, please bring those as well! We can provide additional resources for some of these topics if you are interested in more background knowledge. We are hoping to cover a variety of topics (see below).

Topic	Ties to Technical Core Competencies, Knowledge, Skills, Abilities
Outstandingly Remarkable Values on the 3 Forks Flathead (various)	<u>WSRA Law/Regs/Policy:</u> Ability to describe WSR values for designated rivers in management areas. River side discussion, and optional advanced reading and Provalens online course.
Authority of the Resource Technique/Public Contacts	<u>River Management Field Skills:</u> Knowledge of non-LE techniques to educate public on rules/regs. River side discussion, and optional advanced reading and LNT Center YouTube video.
Joint Patrolling/Management (GNP vs FWP vs FNF)	<u>Other Relevant Laws/Policies/Tools:</u> Knowledge of federal, state, and local policies and laws which apply to rivers in management area. River side discussion.

Flathead River System	<u>Natural/Cultural/Rec Resources Manage/Monitor</u> : Knowledge of the story of human occupancy of the area. River side discussion, and optional advanced reading.
Increasing Rec Use, Changing Use Patterns	<u>Visitor Use Management</u> : Skilled at effective communication with river corridor users. River side discussion.

**2023 River Ranger Rendezvous Registration Form**  
**July 25<sup>th</sup> to July 29<sup>th</sup>**

Trip sign up is first-come, first-served. **Registration will be open from now until July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Cost is \$85/person for non-RMS members and \$65/person for RMS members. Mail this form with cash or a check payable to "Martin Hudson" to: Martin Hudson, PO Box 92, Pinedale, WY 82941.**

Trip slots will be filled in the order that registration forms and checks are received.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Money enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Are you planning to bring a boat and what type? (Circle one). Yes No

Type: \_\_\_\_\_ If you're in a kayak (or similar small craft), will you need your gear carried? Yes No

How many passengers can you take if you are bringing a boat? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you accommodate extra gear (i.e., from a kayaker?) if necessary? Yes No

Do you have specific dietary requirements? \_\_\_\_\_

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We are looking for someone to spearhead meal planning. Are you interested in assisting with meal planning for this trip? Yes No

We will need a few extra kitchen tarps/wings in case of rain during dinner and a few kitchen tables. Do you have a kitchen tarp and/or table available? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

We will need a few extra cook stoves to cook meals. Do you have a cook stove and appropriate fuel available? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ what type of stove? \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Expected arrival time to Hungry Horse Ranger Station? Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: We encourage folks arrive the evening before the trip start – July 24<sup>th</sup> – otherwise plan to arrive by 0900 MST to Hungry Horse on July 25<sup>th</sup>. If you plan to arrive the day before and camp at the Ranger Station, we will need to orient you to the camping area.)

All meals will be provided. You will be responsible for your own river and camping gear, clothing, beverages, chairs, and other personal comfort items. Additional information and details of gear you will need to bring will be emailed to confirmed participants. For more information, contact Echo at [echo.miller-barnes@usda.gov](mailto:echo.miller-barnes@usda.gov) or Colter at [colter.pence@usda.gov](mailto:colter.pence@usda.gov).